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# Malagasy Republic

August 1973

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY

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Armed Forces

## NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY PUBLICATIONS

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# Malagasy Republic

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# Armed Forces

## A. Defense establishment (C)

The armed forces of Madagascar (Malagasy Republic) consist of a 4,000-man army, a 435-man navy and 2 small patrol craft, and a 181-man air force and 14 aircraft, 6 of which are old C-47 light transports.<sup>1</sup> In addition, there are three paramilitary forces; the most significant is the 4,600-man National Gendarmerie, which is regarded as part of the defense forces. Some paramilitary functions are performed by the Mobile Police Force (300 men) and the Civic Service (2,100 men). Except for the gendarmerie, all armed and other paramilitary forces are under the control of the Armed Forces Chief of Staff.

Under the conditions of Franco-Malagasy accords signed at independence, Madagascar has been heavily dependent on French forces and French material assistance for its national defense. The renegotiation of the accords in 1973, however, will significantly change the Franco-Malagasy defense relationship. Most French forces in the country will be withdrawn by late 1973 except for a naval detachment at the important Diego-Suarez naval base. Although the Malagasy Government will have sovereignty over this base, there will be joint control over the naval dockyard, and France will retain access to the facility on an annual renewal basis. French support will probably be reduced under the circumstances, but it is unlikely to be cut off completely.

As a result of dependence on France, the Malagasy security forces have been basically concerned with internal security. The gendarmerie, organized and developed by the French during the colonial period, is the best trained and equipped organization and is the country's main internal security force. None of the security forces, however, has either large or sophisticated weapons systems. Ground forces have no artillery and only lightly armored vehicles with mounted machineguns. The navy has only a minor combat capability craft, and the air force has no combat aircraft.

<sup>1</sup>For regularly updated information on these armed forces, see the current edition of the *Military Intelligence Summary*, published by the Defense Intelligence Agency.

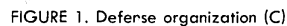
The primary mission of the armed forces is to maintain internal security. In the past the army has never had to develop a capability to defend the country against an external attack because of the presence of French forces; instead the army has served as a backup force to the gendarmerie in the internal role and engaged in civic action programs. The expected reduction in French assistance may cause a serious decline in the overall capabilities of Malagasy forces. On their own they would not be capable of defending the country from attack by a modern invasion force. In addition to the absence of a serious external threat, internal defense is more important because of the potential threat posed by competing tribal, political, and nationalist groups. Despite these underlying problems, the gendarmerie, supported by elements of the armed forces, is considered capable of maintaining internal security as long as French advisers are present.

Tribal differences have affected the alignment of the armed forces. The army is composed mainly of members of the Merina tribe, who inhabit the central plateau region. All other service and paramilitary forces are dominated by the *cotiers*, or coastal people, who comprise the majority of the population and who have long resented the domination and the superior attitude of the wealthier and better educated Merina. Since independence, the government had been controlled by the *cotiers*; however, political power shifted to the Merina when Maj. Gen. Gabriel Ramanantsoa became the Head of Government in May 1972. Ramanantsoa is attempting to steer a middle course in the hope of alleviating, or at least not intensifying, the longstanding animosity between the Merina and the coastal tribes.

Because of former French responsibility for external defense, the Malagasy Republic Government has been content to settle for forces that are basically a constabulary with the mission of preserving domestic tranquility. Nearly all equipment and training have been supplied by France, and French advisers have been prominent in all major units; some have held command posts, and many have been responsible for logistics and maintenance. Until recently, little

The problem of strategic mobility is complicated by poor roads and poorly developed lines of communication, and to compensate for this security forces are kept stationed in population centers and strategic areas likely to be trouble spots. Small units are scattered throughout the rural areas, thereby increasing flexibility and potential for quick response. Equipment has been chosen and organization and training designed to maximize mobility. Ground forces are equipped with personnel carriers rather than heavy

A defense agreement concluded at independence formalized Madagascar's close military relationship with France. The agreement gave France primary responsibility for external defense as well as for equipping, training, and advising Malagasy forces. As of early 1973, France maintained facilities and forces totaling about 3,200 men on the island. As a result of the recent renegotiation of the defense agreement, however, most of these forces are to be withdrawn by September 1973. Under Headquarters, French Forces,





South Indian Ocean, at Tananarive, come French Army, Navy, and Air Force contingents. The army units are an airborne regiment stationed near Tananarive, a Foreign Legion regiment at Diego-Suarez<sup>2</sup> and an infantry regiment on Reunion—in all about 2,150 men. The navy has about 285 men and 2 destroyer escorts stationed at the important naval base at Diego-Suarez. The air force keeps an attack squadron and a transport squadron—totaling about 685 men and 15 aircraft—at Ivate airfield, near Tananarive. In addition to these forces, which help with the training of Malagasy armed forces and the gendarmerie, the French also have other personnel in the country to assist in training; in early 1975 there were an estimated 208 of these, 79 of them with the Malagasy Army, 8 with the navy, 16 with the air force, and 105 with the gendarmerie.

### 1. Military history

During the colonial period (1895-1960), Malagasy soldiers served in the French colonial forces, and some saw action during World War II and in Indochina and Algeria. After the fall of France in 1940, the colonial administration on the island sided with the Vichy Government, and in 1942 Madagascar was invaded by Allied forces. The ranks of the Vichy-French defenders were filled with local colonial troops. Subsequently, when the Malagasy Army was formed at independence in June 1960, there were over 20,000 veterans of the French Army in the country, but most of the initial personnel for the army were transferred directly from the French service. Naval and air forces were created by decree in 1961, but it was not until 1963 that an embryonic navy and air force were actually organized. All three forces were formed and initially staffed by the French, who also provided materiel and facilities.

Since their inception, the Malagasy armed forces have had no actual combat experience; however, twice during recent disturbances they have been deployed to support gendarmerie units. The National Gendarmerie was developed by the French during the colonial period, and some Malagasy personnel served in the lower ranks. At independence, the force was shifted to Malagasy control, and a gradual decrease in the number of French personnel was begun. In 1969 the first indigenous gendarmerie commander was appointed. The force has performed effectively in sweep operations against rural outlaw bands. In April 1971, peasants in one of the most impoverished, neglected parts of the country attacked government

<sup>2</sup>For diacritics on place names see the list of names on the apron of the Summary Map in the Country Profile chapter and the map itself.

posts with primitive weapons. Within a few days, the gendarmerie, with little assistance from the other forces, ended the rebellion, and the peasants were ruthlessly suppressed. Again, it was a stabilizing factor during the May 1972 disorders. The history of French control and influence has left an indelible imprint on the Malagasy forces.

### 2. Command structure

The Head of Government, Maj. Gen. Gabriel Ramanantsoa, has direct control over the armed and paramilitary forces as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces (Figure 1). In addition, he holds the cabinet posts of Minister of National Defense and Armed Forces and Minister of Planning. Although the Head of Government receives advice from other cabinet ministers, he formulates defense policy largely on his own. When Philibert Tsiranana was President, a Special Staff composed of French officers served as his personal advisory group on defense and intelligence matters. After Tsiranana relinquished his power in October 1972, the Special Staff was downgraded and placed under the Malagasy Armed Forces Chief of Staff. The Chief of Staff, the gendarmerie commander, and the Minister of Interior are directly responsible to the Head of Government. All major commands are now held by Malagasy officers, but there are still a number of French officers on the headquarters staff, where their organizational skills can be best utilized and their visibility is minimal. French officers are in charge of the First, Fourth, and Fifth Bureaus, Military Security, and the Navy Bureau.

### B. Joint activities (C)

#### 1. Military manpower

As of 1 July 1973, Madagascar had 1,632,000 males in the ages 15-49, of whom about 59% were physically fit for military service. Their distribution by 5-year age groups is as follows:

AGE	TOTAL MALES	MAXIMUM NUMBER FIT FOR MILITARY SERVICE
15-19	402,000	260,000
20-24	302,000	185,000
25-29	215,000	130,000
30-34	187,000	110,000
35-39	187,000	105,000
40-44	176,000	90,000
45-49	163,000	80,000
Total, 15-49	1,632,000	960,000

The average number reaching military age (20) annually during 1973-77 will total about 75,000.

The typical Malagasy recruit is inured to physical hardship, is patriotic, and adapts well to military service. His educational level is low—he may well be illiterate—and his aptitude in the mechanical and technical fields tends to be poor. By assigning *cotier* enlisted men in *cotier*-dominated units and Merina enlisted men in Merina-dominated units, the danger of an outbreak of intraservice trouble, which used to be a serious problem, has been minimized. With the officer corps, this system is much less rigidly followed, and both *cotier* and Merina officers hold key posts in both the army and gendarmerie. Despite the ethnic composition of these forces, there has been no hostility between them. However, the secondary role the army has traditionally taken to the gendarmerie has been partially based on the army's ethnic makeup, which has caused some disgruntlement. Troops are well disciplined and have a healthy attitude toward military service. They are loyal to their commanders and to the idea of Malagasy independence. The Malagasy soldier is generally resistant to foreign subversion.

Although a conscription system is maintained, the source of all military personnel (except for the Civic Service) is direct enlistment. Males reaching age 20 must register for the draft. Those between the ages of 20 and 51 are subject to military service for an undetermined period. The popularity of a military career, however, has made conscription unnecessary. Recruit enlistment periods vary in length and depend on the force and specific program. Service is longer for officer, NCO, and technical ratings. Enlistment in the regular forces also carries a reserve commitment following separation from active duty. The reserves are estimated at about 20,000 men, mainly veterans of French service. Many of them are old and poor but maintain their enthusiasm for the military. With foreign logistic support, the army could be increased by about 3,000 men, i.e., 2 or 3 battalions, but mobilization capacity is limited by insufficient arms and equipment. Some veterans of French service could provide an NCO nucleus to train conscripts, but illiteracy and a lack of organizational skill would be major problems.

## 2. Strength trends

The armed forces have grown slowly since independence, with most of the growth occurring in the first 5 years. Over the past few years, strength levels have stabilized, except for recent increases to improve internal security capabilities (Figure 2). The

FIGURE 2. Armed forces personnel strength\* (C)

YEAR	ARMY	NAVY	AIR FORCE	GENDARMERIE	TOTAL
1960.....	1,000	None	None	na	5,000
1963.....	1,800	150	65	4,000	6,015
1964.....	2,500	150	100	1,000	6,750
1966.....	3,700	150	100	4,000	7,950
1968.....	3,700	200	143	4,000	8,040
1970.....	3,700	200	140	3,800	7,840
1972.....	3,700	250	180	4,100	8,230
1973.....	4,000	435	180	4,600	9,215

na Data not available.

\*Some figures are estimates and include French advisers.

army has reached its planned 4,000-man level. However, the army probably will be expanded over the next few years because of the sharp reduction in the French military forces. Expansion will not appreciably increase army capabilities. The navy and air force have shown no significant growth in recent years in either personnel strength or equipment; they are likely to remain static. The recent increase in naval strength reflects the creation of a second naval infantry company. Plans to acquire an additional craft for the navy and a helicopter for the air force have recently been dropped. Budgetary restrictions may account for the fluctuation in gendarmerie strength; it will probably remain about 4,600. In 1965, the Republican Security Force (FRS), recently renamed the Mobile Police Force (FMP), was organized as a 500-man unit, subsequently increased to 1,000, and following recent internal developments has dwindled to 300. The fledgling Civic Service, which had about 100 men in 1966, has steadily increased.

## 3. Training

Joint service training is arranged through the Chief of Staff and headquarters staff. Training exercises are designed to counter an invasion or foreign-supported insurgency. Except for the 1972 joint and combined military exercise that was canceled, the annual maneuvers, which have been held since 1967, always in September, usually run from 7 to 9 days, and all Malagasy armed and paramilitary forces participate, including some French elements. The army usually provides most of the participants and cooperates closely with the French. The navy provides coastal patrols and uses its naval infantry, while the air force provides troops and supplies and flies reconnaissance. A paratroop of French and Malagasy troops normally conclude the exercise. Gendarmerie, FRS, and Civic Service troops may also participate, but the maneuvers are primarily an armed forces exercise. French units

and advisers have played a significant role in the conduct of these exercises, and without full French support their value will decrease. In addition to boosting morale, the exercises are mainly a test of strategic mobility, with forces being transported considerable distances over rugged terrain. The tactical value of these exercises, however, is questionable.

The Antsirabe Military Academy, located about 80 miles south of the capital at a former French military complex, was established in 1966 and conducts a 3-year course for officer cadets (Figure 3). Upon graduation, the newly commissioned officers are assigned to one of three services. The top graduates are selected for the gendarmerie middle ranked graduates for the army, and those at the bottom for the Civic Service. The faculty is composed of a superintendent, 10 officers, and several NCO's and has well-motivated French and Malagasy personnel. About 30 to 35 students are enrolled each year. Students are selected by competitive examination; about 12% of the applicants are selected, and the majority of these are Merina. In support of the civic action mission, a considerable amount of time is spent on nonmilitary subjects, including agriculture, demography, language, and automotive mechanics. The top student in each graduating class is known as the *Ombimanga* or "head bull." Officer cadets from other French-speaking countries attend the academy, including a few from Niger, Senegal, and Chad.

#### 4. Military budget

The budget is formulated by the Head of Government who holds the portfolios of Minister of National Defense and Armed Forces and Minister of Planning. Military budgets include funds for the

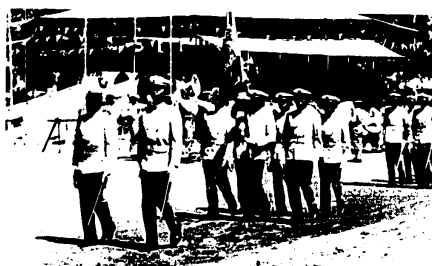


FIGURE 3. Cadets of the Antsirabe Military Academy (U/OU)

army, navy, and air force, as well as for the gendarmerie, which is regarded as part of the defense force. In recent years, allocations for the gendarmerie have accounted for about 60% of the military budget. Military budgets in millions of U.S. dollars for fiscal years 1968 through 1972 are as follows:

	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
Defense budget*	13.1	13.6	12.2	12.8	14.7
Defense budget as a percent of total budget	7.5	7.5	7.8	8.2	7.2
Defense budget as a percent of GNP	1.8	1.7	1.4	na	na

na Data not available.

\*Converted at exchange rates as follows: 1968-69, 248 francs equal US\$1.00; 1970-71, 278 francs equal US\$1.00; 1972, 256 francs equal US\$1.00.

#### 5. Logistics

Economic activity in underdeveloped Madagascar is dominated by agriculture. Industry is limited to processing agricultural output and production of some consumer goods. The country thus has no capability to produce military equipment, and all armed forces and paramilitary materiel has been obtained from foreign sources. France, the primary supplier, has been committed by treaty to assist in the defense of the republic and to equip its armed forces. Despite the recent renegotiations France will probably continue to be a principal source, although not the dominant one as in the past. A greater diversification of sources can be expected. French assistance has included all infantry-type weapons, trucks, naval craft, transport and reconnaissance aircraft, and helicopters valued at about \$36 million. Israel has provided the Mobile Police Force (FMP) with automatic rifles and submachineguns; West Germany has supplied naval patrol craft. No military assistance has been obtained from Communist countries. Logistics services are provided through the headquarters staff for all security force elements, including the gendarmerie. The 4th Bureau (logistics) is responsible for the procurement, storage, and distribution of common use military stores.

#### C. Army (C)

The Malagasy Army is a light infantry force with minor defensive and almost no offensive capability. The army is dependent on direct assistance from French forces to successfully perform its external defense mission. In its secondary role as an internal

security force, the army is capable of suppressing minor tribal or political disorders. However, in this role it serves mainly as a backup force to the gendarmerie—during the 1971 revolt, the army performed only guard duty. The converse is true with respect to external defense, where the roles played by these two forces are reversed. Over the last few years the army has become increasingly involved in civic action programs. These have included agricultural and irrigation projects, roadbuilding and repair, firefighting, and reforestation.

The strength of the army is built around the nucleus of a few officers and many NCO's with French Army experience. Enlisted personnel are hardy, dedicated, and extremely patriotic. The main weakness is the severe shortage of well-trained staff officers and of technically competent enlisted specialists. Other weaknesses include the dependence upon foreign aid and a low literacy rate. These shortcomings have resulted in the army's dependence on French personnel to fill many key posts. The rudimentary training is adequate, but weapons and other equipment are old and generally insufficient.

### 1. Organization

The Malagasy Army is organized into a headquarters with a complete staff element, two interarms regiments (battalions), an engineer regiment (battalion), and a services battalion (Figure 1). Control is exercised by the Commander in Chief through the Chief of Staff. The Headquarters Staff serves as the chief administrative element for the army, navy, air force, Civic Service, FMP, and, to some extent, for the gendarmerie. The Staff has five bureaus organized along the lines of a regular military staff: 1st Bureau (administration), 2d Bureau (intelligence), 3d Bureau (operations), 4th Bureau (logistics), and 5th Bureau (civil affairs). The latter bureau is probably responsible for directing the army's civic action programs. The Staff also has four directors, two of whom have multiservice functions—military security and communications.

### 2. Strength, composition, and disposition

The army has a strength of 4,000 men, including 120 officers, 3,880 enlisted men, and an estimated 79 French Army advisers. The main combat units are the two battalion-size interarms regiments; both interarms regiments as well as the engineer regiment have subordinate companies deployed to widely separated

towns. The 1st Malagasy Interarms Regiment (RIAM) and the 2d RIAM have four infantry companies each; however, the 1st RIAM, with a total personnel strength of about 1,000, also has two parachute companies, a motorized infantry company, and an armored reconnaissance platoon. The Engineer Regiment has four companies, including one for heavy equipment and the Services Battalion has three companies—quartermaster, signal, and administration. Small arms are mainly obsolescent types. They include the 7.5-mm MAS-36 bolt-action rifle, 7.5-mm M1949 semiautomatic rifle, and 9-mm MAT-49 submachinegun. The infantry support weapons are the light machinegun (7.5-mm), heavy machinegun (.50 cal.), and 81-mm mortar, but they are kept in storage and seldom used. A small number of aging, lightly armored wheeled vehicles equip the reconnaissance platoon. The 1st RIAM, Engineer Regiment, Services Battalion, and all headquarters elements are located in Tananarive; the 2d RIAM is at Fianarantsoa.

### 3. Training

Basic military training for recruits is conducted within individual units. This traditionally has been accomplished under the supervision of French advisers. Officer and specialist training is provided at two Malagasy military schools and in France. Most army officers have been trained in France, but since 1970 graduates of the military academy have joined the ranks. Antsirabe Military Academy graduates about 10 new officers annually; some officer cadets are still sent to France, as are candidates for advanced courses. The NCO school at Fianarantsoa provides a number of specialized courses for enlisted personnel, many of them in technical subjects. Nevertheless, some Malagasy personnel are still sent abroad for specialist training. The army conducts a parachute qualification course for students from the two military schools and the gendarmerie. The annual joint and combined maneuvers and shorter, less frequent army exercises provide the only opportunities for unit training. Company size units participate in these exercises which emphasize mobility; vehicles are used extensively, but some units move cross country on foot. French influence is evident in every phase of Malagasy Army training.

### 4. Logistics

The 4th Bureau, Headquarters Staff is responsible for armed forces logistics. A quartermaster company of

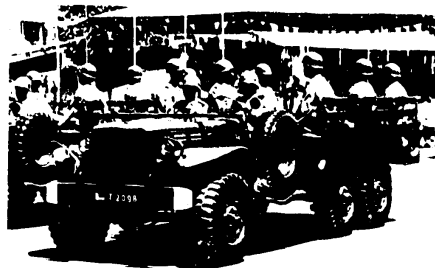


FIGURE 4. Soldiers on parade in one of the army's U.S.-built Dodge 1 1/2-ton trucks (U OU)

the Services Battalion satisfies the army's specific supply needs. The company requisitions supplies through the 4th Bureau and is then responsible for storage and distribution. It may also supply items to the gendarmerie. This system has worked adequately under French supervision, but if it is denied French support, logistic capability would be impaired. An estimated 250 vehicles, including 1/3 to 2 1/2-ton trucks (Figure 4), and about 20 Ferret Mk.2 and M3A1 scout cars are assigned to the army (Figures 5 and 6). All army equipment has been provided by France. Vehicles and other major items of equipment are stored in the Tananarive area, where maintenance facilities are located. Maintenance has been good primarily because of French assistance and the low level of utilization. The army's old vehicles have proved to be a reliable means of transport during field exercises.



FIGURE 5. British-built Ferret MK.2 scout cars, which are armed with .30 caliber machineguns and are used by both the army and the gendarmerie (U OU)

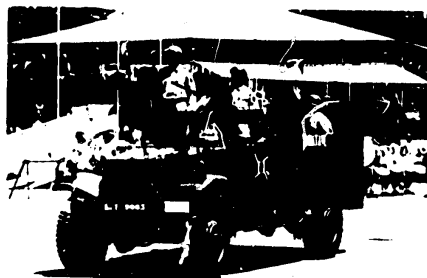


FIGURE 6. A U.S.-built, World War II M3A1 scout car used by the Malagasy Army and gendarmerie. Main armament is the .50 caliber machinegun. (U OU)

#### D. Navy (C)

The Malagasy Navy is a minuscule coast guard-type force with only minor combat capabilities. Designed as an intervention force, the navy's mission is to assist in maintaining internal security, which it is capable of doing, but it has no capability to effectively patrol the island's 3,000-mile coastline. The navy is also active in civic action programs. During the 1971 revolt, its two small craft were deployed to the south but saw no action. The navy is totally dependent on the French for all phases of its operation.

The commander of the navy has operational control of the force and is responsible to the Armed Forces Chief of Staff. However, the Navy Bureau in the Headquarters Staff is responsible for administration, plans, and logistics. In effect, the Navy Bureau functions as a naval headquarters except for command responsibility. Naval units are organized into two infantry companies and two patrol craft.

The navy has a strength of 435 men, including about 10 officers. Most of the personnel are assigned to the naval infantry. About 8 French officers and NCO's serve with the navy. The navy's two craft are the *matlaka*, a modern motor gunboat, and the *fanantenana*, a converted trawler (Figures 7 and 8). The vessels have crew complements of 31 and 11, respectively, and mount two 40-mm guns, one forward and one aft, but the *matlaka* is much faster. The 194-foot *fanantenana* can accommodate up to 60 naval infantrymen. All vessels and personnel are stationed at Diego-Suarez, the French naval base.

The quality of naval training is adequate for its simple mission, but a shortage of trained officers and technical specialists has made the force dependent on

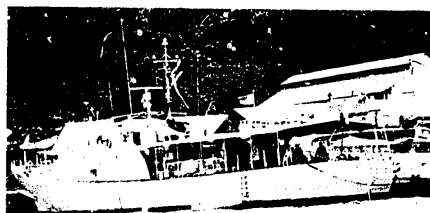


FIGURE 7. The patrol motor gunboat *Mailaka*, the only modern vessel in the navy (U/OU)

the French. All officer training has been accomplished in France, while enlisted men's training has been conducted at Diego-Suarez, by French personnel. Shipboard training is provided on the two vessels. The *mailak* usually is away from home port about 120 days during the year for operational training; however, much of the time consists of showing the flag around the island. The *fanantenana* supports naval infantry training, and both vessels normally participate in the annual joint and combined exercises.

The Navy Bureau is responsible for procuring naval supplies. Such supplies as the Malagasy Navy may need are probably maintained by the French at Diego-Suarez. With the help of their French advisers, indigenous personnel have been capable of performing routine maintenance on their small naval craft, but all extensive maintenance and overhaul operations have been performed by the French Navy at its Diego-Suarez ship-repair facilities. The French are constructing an LST-type vessel at Diego-Suarez which may be for the Malagasy Navy.

The 275-man naval infantry is an intervention force designed to assist the navy in its internal security and civic action mission. It is organized into two companies, one at Diego-Suarez and a recently formed 150-man company at Tamatave. The company commander at Diego-Suarez is responsible to the navy commander, but the unit at Tamatave may be



FIGURE 8. The patrol craft *Fanantenana* (U/OU)

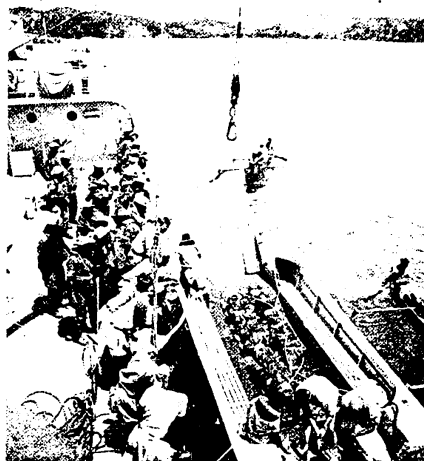


FIGURE 9. Naval infantry prepare to disembark from the *Fanantenana* (U/OU)

responsible to the 1st RAIM of the army. Up to 60 fully equipped men can be transported by the *fanantenana* (Figure 9), which carries two small landing craft, and can be landed along the coast in support of other security forces. Independently, the naval infantry would only be effective in suppressing small internal disorders. The force is equipped and uniformed the same as army troops except for a distinctive naval cap. Much of its training time is spent on landing and reembarking from the *fanantenana*.

#### E. Air force (C)

The Malagasy Air Force is a small support unit with marginal capabilities. Its mission is to provide assistance to ground forces by performing reconnaissance, paratroop, and transport duties. It is also tasked to assist the civil government with VIP transport and other special duties. The air force is capable of flying support missions under visual flying conditions, but its capacity for sustained operations is limited by its small inventory and maintenance problems. The force has a few well-trained personnel, but it has been almost totally dependent on the French for operations, maintenance, training, and equipment. It is also hampered by a lack of operating funds, aging equipment, and a shortage of spare parts. During the 1971 revolt, the air force airlifted and supplied

gendarmerie troops and participated in a small paratroop assault operation. After a few days of sustained operations, however, it had to be augmented by French aircraft.

The Malagasy squadron commander has tactical command of the air force. For operations, he is subordinate to the Armed Forces Chief of Staff; for administrative and logistic matters, he reports to the Chief of the Air Bureau on the Headquarters Staff. In addition to being air adviser to the Chief of Staff, the Chief of the Air Bureau, until 1972 a post held by a French officer, exercises more control over the air force than the squadron commander. The air force is organized into one composite unit called the 1st Malagasy Squadron.

The air force has a strength of 181 men, including 20 officers, 103 NCO's, and 58 enlisted men. Pilot strength is 15. Included in the air force strength totals are 5 French officers (all pilots) and 11 French NCO's. The inventory comprises 14 aircraft, 8 of them aging, obsolescent types. The primary aircraft are six old C-47 light transports, equipped to carry either cargo or personnel, and are the only aircraft capable of supporting army and gendarmerie paratroops. Two Broussards, rapidly deteriorating utility aircraft, are being phased out. There are three Reims-Cessna 337 aircraft, a new multipurpose light aircraft that France is supplying to many of its former African colonies, and two Piper Aztecs transferred from other government agencies. The air force has no combat aircraft. The Reims-Cessna 337, however, can be converted to a light attack aircraft by adding the necessary equipment to carry rockets or machinegun pods or small bombs. One Alouette III helicopter is used primarily for VIP transport. All aircraft, personnel, administrative offices, and maintenance facilities are located at Tananarive/Ivato airfield. The air force can utilize numerous small airstrips on the island.

Air force training is inadequate because it fails to provide the number of skilled personnel necessary to perform all duties without foreign assistance. This is partly attributed to the low quality of indigenous personnel, who are poorly educated and have no technical background, and to the French desire to keep the air force dependent. All in-country training has been conducted by French Air Force (FAF) advisers or regular FAF units and has included basic military and some air force technical training. Pilots, navigators, radio operators, and a few maintenance specialists, however, receive training in France. Two Malagasy pilots are normally assigned, to the FAF's *Ecole de l'Air* at Solon, France, and four student pilots

are scheduled to attend in 1973. Joint operational training is limited to annual military maneuvers and infrequent army exercises. Practical experience was gained in 1971, when the air force flew 322 hours of sorties in support of ground forces employed against the rebels in the south. Air force pilots log about 200 flying hours annually.

The Air Bureau of the Headquarters Staff is responsible for procuring aircraft, spare parts, specialized equipment, and general supplies. Stores are maintained at the Ivato airfield. Aircraft are of French or U.S. design and have been supplied by France as grant aid or gifts. Some of the C-47's were transferred from Air Madagascar, the national air carrier. There are no plans to acquire additional aircraft; plans to purchase a medium transport helicopter have been dropped. The air force is capable of performing routine maintenance on all its aircraft at Ivato with French assistance. In recent years, a shortage of spare parts has led to cannibalization and to a reduced operational capability. The transit time for urgently needed spare parts from France ranges from 30 to 90 days. The logistics system is adequate only for day-to-day operations.

## **F. Paramilitary forces (C)**

Paramilitary forces consist of the National Gendarmerie (GN), Mobile Police Force (FMP), and Civic Service, totaling some 7,000 personnel. Over half of these are members of the prestigious gendarmerie, Madagascar's most effective security force. The gendarmerie is the country's main internal security organization, whereas the army is the primary force responsible for external defense. In the postindependence period, the gendarmerie has been one of the essential factors for maintaining political stability on the island, and as such the force has been directly responsible to the Head of Government. The FRS, formed as an elite police antiriot force in 1965 and under the Minister of Interior until 1971, is now under the Armed Forces Chief of Staff. The Civic Service, which is closely affiliated with the army, is primarily involved in civic action programs, but it represents a trained manpower reserve capable of performing minor internal security duties.

### **I. National Gendarmerie**

The National Gendarmerie (GN), a well-trained, all-volunteer paramilitary force of 4,600 personnel, including 105 French advisers, is effective, mobile, and respected. It is intentionally made up largely of

personnel from the coastal tribes (as a counterpoise to the Merina-dominated army) and is considered to be reliable and loyal to the government. It is capable of carrying out its mission of maintaining internal order. The gendarmerie demonstrated its capability to handle internal security problems in 1971, when several gendarmerie posts were attacked by rebels in the south and the force responded quickly and effectively in quelling the rebellion. It required only minimal assistance from other Malagasy forces (i.e., air transport), and no direct military assistance from the French. Any insurgent force would find the gendarmerie a difficult adversary.

Traditionally the gendarmerie commander, personally responsible to the Head of Government, has taken a strong hand in running the force. Command and control lines are completely within the gendarmerie; however, it is dependent on the armed forces for some administrative and logistic support (Figure 1). The basic organizational structure is built on the gendarmerie's six regional *groupements* (groups)—one in each province. A regional *groupement* normally has three subordinate companies, each company has three brigades, and each brigade an undetermined number of small posts. In approximate size, the *groupements* are equivalent to battalions, the companies to infantry companies, the brigades to platoons, and the posts to sections. This organization allows the force to work closely with the populace to facilitate intelligence gathering, to maintain a presence in major villages and towns throughout the country, and to have greater flexibility. The numerous gendarmerie posts are linked by an excellent islandwide communications network. Should the need for larger size units arise, they can be dispatched from the completely mobile Intervention Group (battalion).

The gendarmerie's headquarters elements, the Intervention Group, and a regional *groupement* are located in Tananarive. The Intervention Group contains two armored squadrons, a mobile squadron, a mixed squadron with mobile troops and armored vehicles, and a paratroop platoon. Three recently organized squadrons are probably also assigned to the Intervention Group. Regional *groupements* are headquartered at Tamatave, Diego-Suarez, Majunga, Tuléar, and Fianarantsoa. The latter has been reinforced with a mixed detachment since the 1971 disturbances.

The gendarmerie has the same type of weapons and equipment as the army—French small arms, both 7.5-mm and .50 caliber machineguns, 81-mm mortars, jeeps, a variety of trucks (1½ to 3 ton), and lightly

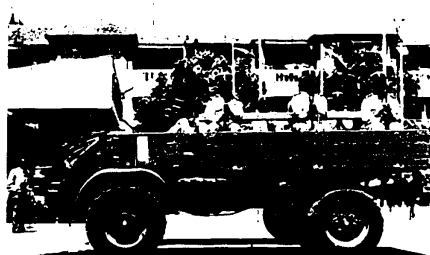


FIGURE 10. The Unimog, a modern four-wheel-drive gendarmerie vehicle, is ideal for use in the Malagasy Republic, which has poor roads (U/OU)

armored vehicles (Figure 6). Both army and gendarmerie armored units use Ferret Mk2 and M3A1 scout cars. Army vehicles are painted olive drab, but those of the gendarmerie are blue. Two vehicles unique to the gendarmerie are the West German-made Unimog utility vehicle (Figure 10) and the U.S.-built armored halftrack (Figure 11). The Unimog is the newest military vehicle acquired by this force and illustrates the preference given to the gendarmerie. The halftrack is significant because it gives the force offroad capability enabling rapid deployment in rugged rural areas. The gendarmerie receives some logistic support from the army, but it has been ultimately dependent on France for weapons, ammunition, equipment, and other military stores, and French advisers have assisted the program. The impact of the probable decrease in French advisory support will be most significant in the gendarmerie because of this force's importance as the country's main internal security organization. Although it is unlikely that all French advisers will be withdrawn, a reduction is quite possible, and this would reduce force capabilities.

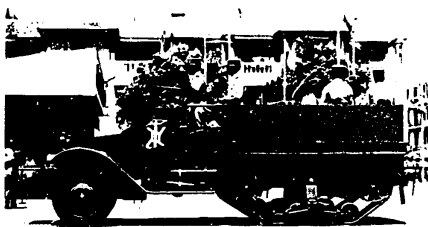


FIGURE 11. A U.S.-built, World War II M-2 halftrack used by the gendarmerie. The 10-ton armored vehicle, used for reconnaissance, mounts a heavy machine-gun. (U/OU)



Training in the gendarmerie is good. Basic recruit training is accomplished at the Gendarmerie School at Moramanga, which has been heavily staffed by the French. The French presence in this school has been largely responsible for the continuance of their considerable influence in the force despite the gradual reduction of the number of advisers since independence. The school has a staff of about 60 instructors, a capacity of 600 students, and, in addition to recruit training, offers technical and professional advancement courses. Training for gendarmes is more comprehensive than for the regular military because they operate in small units and perform many functions in rural areas where they are the only government authority. Gendarmerie officers are either the top graduates of the military academy or have been trained in France. The force normally participates in the annual joint and combined exercises but only in a supporting role. Little information is available on unit training in the gendarmerie; however, training of this type probably involves deployment exercises by the Intervention Group.

## 2. Mobile Police Force

In early 1973 the Republican Security Force (FRS) was renamed the Mobile Police Force (FMP) and is being reorganized, details of which are not available. It is a well-armed special police unit designed as a rapid reaction security force. The FRS force was formed in 1965 under the direction of the Minister of Interior; initial training and materiel were supplied by the Israelis. Early in 1971, President Tsiranana took personal control of the FRS from the then Minister of Interior Andre Resampa, in order to diminish Resampa's power base. The force's mission, which it is potentially capable of performing, is riot control and other internal security duties. However, its once sterling image has been damaged by political intrigue and its overreaction by firing on unarmed demonstrators during the May 1972 disturbances.

Prior to the reorganization, the FRS was subordinate to the Armed Forces Chief of Staff. It was organized into a headquarters, six companies, and a coast guard unit. Following the reorganization, the FMP total personnel strength was reduced to 300 but will eventually resume its former strength of 1,000 troops. Personnel are volunteers from the ranks of the regular police, and nearly all are members of the coastal tribes. FMP units (Figure 12) are located in Tananarive, a Merina tribal area, and are equipped with 7.62-mm FN light automatic rifles and 9-mm UZI submachineguns provided by the Israelis.



FIGURE 12. Well-armed Republican Security Force troops on parade in Tananarive, where they are distrusted by the local, predominantly Merina, population (U/OU)

The coast guard unit, located at the Majunga Coastal Base, is equipped with four inoperable 45-foot *belatrix*-class patrol boats (Figure 13) acquired as grant aid from West Germany in 1963. Each boat is armed with a 40-mm gun, but maintenance is practically nonexistent. These boats were acquired to supplement the navy by providing close-in coastal patrol. The coast guard, however, has no capability to accomplish this mission.

The FMP probably receives most of its logistic support through the national police but remains dependent on foreign sources for arms and ammunition. The former FRS Academy, a small training school, is located in the same compound as the Military Academy at Antsirabe. Little is known of joint training with other paramilitary forces.

## 3. Civic Service

The Civic Service (Figure 14) is a minor paramilitary force known mainly for its civic action programs. Its mission is to undertake rural development projects and to serve as a reserve internal security force. Military capabilities are limited to minor security duties, such as guarding installations.

The Civic Service commander is directly responsible to the army commander. The force is organized into a



FIGURE 13. Coast guard boats, which are inoperable, are anchored off the west coast ports of Tulear and Majunga (C)

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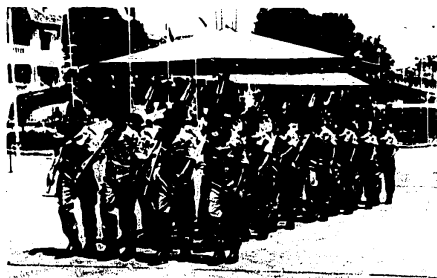


FIGURE 14. Civic Service personnel on parade carrying shovels (U/OU)

headquarters company and 15 field companies located in rural areas. Total strength of this organization is about 2,100 men, including some French advisers. A field company is composed of about 100 men, who are normally unarmed. These units are engaged in diverse programs, such as public health, education, road construction, irrigation, and agricultural instruction.

All logistical support comes from the army. Civic Service troops are equipped with old bolt-action rifles and a few submachineguns of French origin. Recruits receive 2 months of basic training at a camp near Antsirabe that can accommodate about 140. This training emphasizes civic action, but it also includes military drill and small arms instruction. A separate Civic Service Academy provides some advanced courses, again emphasizing civic action.